prevent its further spread by breaking the chain of transmission by curing sputum positive cases. Presently more than 500 milHon population has been covered under the revised strategy. It is envisaged to cover 800 million population by 2004 and whole country by 2005.

Newsitem "Keeping Medical Cost Down"

1253. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of HEALtH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Keeping medical cost down", which appeared in the 'Hindustan Times', dated 23rd October, 2002;

(b) if so. Government's reaction thereon; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that the medical costs are kept at the lower level?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The cardiac surgery requires expensive equipments and as such the cost is likely to be on the higher side. The rates prevalent in AIIMS are as follows:

Cardiac angiography	Rs. 4,000/-
Right and left heart study with angiography	Rs. 6,000/-
Coronary angioplasty with Stenting	Rs. 85,000/-
Primary Stenting	Rs. 65,000/-
Valve dilatation (mitral)	Rs. 15,000/-
Coronary bypass surgery	Rs. 55,000/-
Single Valve replacement Surgery	Rs. 85,000/-
Double valve replacement Surgery	Rs. 1,35,000/-

Financial Assistance is provided to patients living Below Poverty Line under the National Illness Assistance Fund, who are suffering from major life threatening diseases including cardiac problems. Adhoc assistance is also released fi"om Health Minister's discretionary grant for treatment purposes.